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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3879
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2524
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2647
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1140
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1916
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2271
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2696
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5124
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1803
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000006

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B.WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: MDC SPOKESPERSON CHAMISA ON NEGOTIATIONS

REF: 08 HARARE 1146

Classified By: CDA Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4 (d)

1. (C) According to MDC spokesperson Nelson Chamisa, the MDC's goal is new elections through which it can take over complete control of government. Chamisa told polecon chief December 31 the MDC believes it can best shape the electoral environment, including drafting of a new constitution, through participation in a power-sharing government. The MDC will therefore continue to participate in negotiations. It will, however, insist on resolution of outstanding issues. These include first and foremost an equitable distribution of ministries, although the MDC will agree to share leadership of Home Affairs. Other outstanding issues are division of governorships, appointment of ambassadors and permanent secretaries, and composition and function of the national security council. Finally, the MDC wants the recent appointments of Reserve Bank governor Gideon Gono and Attorney General Johannes Tomana rescinded, and a sunset clause on a power-sharing government so that there is a deadline for new elections.

2. (C) We asked Chamisa about MDC secretary-general Tendai Biti's comments that a deal with ZANU-PF was essentially dead. Chamisa responded that the MDC National Council had taken a position in favor of a power-sharing government as long as preconditions were met, and that Biti did not speak for the MDC. He noted that Biti was disappointed that after personally negotiating an agreement with ZANU-PF, it was made clear that he would not become a deputy prime minister, the post that he wanted. Chamisa acknowledged that ZANU-PF might very well not agree to the MDC's positions on outstanding issues, in which case the MDC would not enter government. Chamisa thought that Zimbabwean president Mugabe wanted an agreement, but that others within ZANU-PF, particularly Emmerson Mnangagwa, were adamantly opposed.

3. (C) Noting that Mugabe had sent a letter to MDC faction heads Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara inviting them to join the government, Chamisa argued Mugabe was not the head

of a legally constituted government and therefore had no right to issue such an invitation. He said that Tsvangirai had written Mugabe and South African president Motlanthe to propose a meeting between him and Mugabe to discuss the outstanding issues as well as the negotiating atmosphere, including the recent spate of abductions.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) Tsvangirai is now in South Africa and we understand has begun meetings with the South African mediation team. There will undoubtedly be pressure from South Africa on both ZANU-PF and the MDC to reach an agreement. Two key near-term events are the MDC leadership strategy conference in South Africa next week, and, if it takes place, a meeting between Mugabe and Tsvangirai. An Embassy contact close to ZANU-PF told us that Mugabe will be in the Far East until the middle of January; a meeting between the principals would have to await his return.

¶5. (C) The MDC is faced with two largely unsatisfactory choices. It can remain outside of government and attempt to pressure the government as the desperate situation in the country continues. But Mugabe appears resolute in withstanding pressure and remaining in power. Or the MDC can join the government with knowledge that ZANU-PF will attempt to maintain the reigns of power and marginalize the MDC. For now, the MDC appears to be opting for the latter, believing

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that as part of government it can best try to address the humanitarian crisis and begin to prepare for elections. It has made specific demands regarding outstanding issues and has placed the ball in ZANU-PF's court.

¶6. (C) Still unresolved is the fate of about 40 individuals, a number of them MDC officials, who have been abducted by government security forces during the last two months. On December 19, Tsvangirai said the MDC would suspend negotiations if the abductees were not released or charged in court by January 1. 18 have now been brought to court and hearings are taking place. But there is no word on the rest.
END COMMENT.

DHANANI